

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY AND MARKETING PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM E-COMMERCE FIRMS IN THAILAND

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Abstract: Undeniably, social media has come to a higher degree of popularity in the online world. Currently, most businesses have been utilizing any social media platforms for social media marketing in their strategy. Yet, in this sense it still has to be explored concerning how social media marketing strategy affects marketing performance. Therefore, this paper aims at investigating the relationship between dimension of social media marketing strategy (SMMS) and marketing outcomes. The questionnaires of 298 e-commerce firms in Thailand were collected. Regression analysis was employed to verify the hypotheses. The evidence highlights that market response timeliness orientation has the strongest positive significance for all marketing outcomes. Both product diversity presentation awareness and proactive competitor learning capability are significantly positive to marketing operation excellence. Furthermore, the findings also suggest that each dimension of SMMS required either marketing operation excellence or increased customer satisfaction as a mediator variable effect on marketing performance. The finding not only provides contributions but also recommendation for future research.

Keywords: social media marketing strategy, customer communication channel focus, product diversity presentation awareness, proactive competitor learning capability, market response timeliness orientation, marketing operation, cost utilization, customer satisfaction, marketing performance.

5. Introduction

Since the 1990s, social media has gained popularity worldwide (Campbell, Anitsal, and Anitsal, 2013). The development of internet technology has transformed the communication manner that affects billions of people.

what is necessary for more interaction between business and the customer. Due to the expansion of internet users, high speed connection, ease of use, and the speedy distribution of social media; more firms have applicable marketing strategy (Goi, 2014; Zhou and Wang, 2014). The higher growth rate of internet users and registered social media is one motive to marketers concerning social media platform engagement (Carim and Warwick, 2013). Social media are important for viewing both customer and business aspects. In the customer moment that one knows as information, online reviews, rating of goods and services, and pre-purchase decision-making can be obtained from social media instruments (Wang and Chang, 2013).

Therefore, businesses have more choices for determining marketing strategy such as building customer relationships, public communication, digital content diversity channels, advertising flexibility,

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Social media is an online community built on internet technology that attains

and low cost operations (Best, Manktelow, and Taylor, 2014).

Social media marketing has been studied in both quantitative and qualitative research. For example, in the quantitative research of Schniederjans, Cao, and Schniederjans (2013), social media usage of impressionable management strategy in behavior among ingratiation, intimidation, organizational promotion, and supplication are significantly related to business performance that can cover both financial and marketing performance. In this study, marketing performance is extended to the outcome of SMMS that can be both a financial and a nonfinancial measurement. Therefore, marketing performance can be assessed by results over the prior year, such as in an increase in sales growth, net profit, reduction of sales costs, and the satisfaction level of the executive or manager (Eid and El-Gohary, 2013; O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007).

Accordingly, Dateling and Bick (2013) studied the impact of social media on the marketing strategies of South African businesses by using qualitative research in small sample sizes and also offered suggestions for further research in a quantitative approach with a larger sample size. Moreover, most studies in social media focus on a consumer's perspective such as consumer behavior, electronic word-of-mouth communication, and online shopping behavior (Eagleman, 2013; Wang and Chang, 2013; Wolny and Mueller, 2013). Even though the aforementioned indicates that the study of social media marketing is evident, both quantitative and qualitative research, however, administer a consumer's perspective rather than strategy at the firm level. These issues shed light on research gaps in the literature. Also, The National Statistical Office of Thailand (NSO) reported that Business to Consumer (B2C) transactions totaled 18.2 billion baht in 2013; the main solution in customer care service method is the call center (76.7%), e-mail (73.1%), and social media channels such as Facebook, Line, and Twitter

(30.8%), respectively (NSO, 2014). Interestingly, there are two important points in the Thai e-commerce context, which are rapid growth rates of registered users of any social media platforms; yet the proportion of social media strategy utilization in B2C business is still lowest. It is advertent and challenging in Thai e-commerce operation; and one needs to understand how to build superior competitive advantage and marketing performance success. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between dimensions of SMMS and marketing outcomes in Thai e-commerce firms.

6. Literature Review

In this study, a conceptual framework of social media marketing strategy and marketing outcome is explicitly discussed and elaborately examined. Thus, the concept, linkage, and research model is provided in Figure 1.

- *Social Media Marketing Strategy*

SMMS is an important issue for an online marketer, and is able to support the business to enhance the marketing outcome in the digital era. The aspect of social media marketing is a fulfilment of traditional marketing that is a new practice to information management (Dahnil et al., 2014). Therefore, the social media is a new medium that the firm should customer participation need to be coordination in the process of design and planning of social media utilizing.

Furthermore, prior studies discover social media as the new media of marketing tools to interact with their customer. Accordingly, Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin (2015) found that social media is employed for several purposes such as advertising, promotion, branding, searching information, and customer relationship building. Also, it has an effect on business performance by cost reduction in marketing and customer service operations. Likewise, one study examines the impacts of social media on the bank in Malaysia such as in

conversation, sharing, publishing, and participation. As a result, the communication between banks and their customers are by employing social media, in particular, to assist in new product development or product innovation, to increase the customer experience, to build an organizations' image, and to promote strategy development (Goi, 2014).

This point indicates that social media marketing cannot be only a new communicative tool, but also a new medium to present product and service that the firm attempts to promote and attain competitive enhancement in the digital technology era. Moreover, Dateling and Bick (2013) revealed that there are three main points of South African business usefulness of social media that are composed of: digital product promotion, customer care/online reputation management and content dissemination, which can have potential in the marketing process. Social media is able to communicate not only with existing customers but also in acquiring new customers.

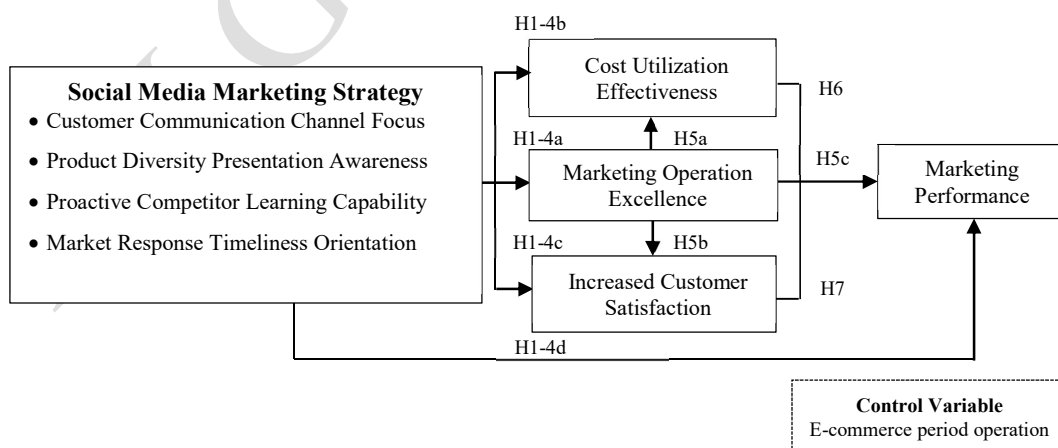
Based on the literature review, this study defines SMMS as the plan in

marketing activity that covers all sales, public relations and customer service through social networking, online communities, or any online collaborative media to gain superior performance achievement (Barker et al., 2013; Evans, 2010). The conceptual framework implementation is able to provide a dimension of social media marketing strategy which integrates from the previous studies (Badea, 2014; Frambach, Prabhu and Verhallen, 2003; Ma, Pant, and Sheng, 2011; Bodlaj et al., 2012). These include customer communication channel focus, product diversity presentation awareness, proactive competitor learning capability, and market response timeliness orientation as elaborated in the next section.

- Customer Communication Channel Focus (CCC)

CCC refers to the ability of a firm to employ social media tools to announce, contact, educate, and connect with its customers and prospects, giving them a voice and discussion on shared interests in order to enhance the relationship with consumers (Badea, 2014).

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework



A wide range of customer communication channel focuses exist, including all forms of promotions,

advertising, or publicity dissemination (Keller, 2001). Social media provides a close-up relationship between business and its customers that have direct interaction, changing from one-to-many to many-to-

many solutions (Kuvykaite and Piligrimiene, 2013). The quantitative study of Samson, Mehta, and Chandani (2014) asserted that online digital media provides rich information such as reviews, ratings, or any comments as communication tools for consumers who intend to buy a car. It is also a positive effect on a customer's buying decisions. In contrast, the qualitative study by Zailskaite-Jakste and Kuvykaite (2013) revealed that social media is able to powerfully collect feedback or daily monitor consumer trends in both positive and negative communication. It can create brand equity. Particularly, word-of-mouth communications in social media platforms are dominant and inexpensive.

Moreover, customer communication channel focus gives more opportunity to regulate and more choice that is a variety of content messages and enables feedback that communicates for each experience of goods and service consumption (Cray, 2012). Based on the above, the literature points out that a communication channel by social media tools is more likely to enhance firms to accomplish good cost utilization (Parveen, Jaafar, and Ainin, 2015; Zailskaite-Jakste and Kuvykaite, 2013), marketing operation optimization (Paniagua and Sapena, 2014), higher customer satisfaction (Eagleman, 2013), and marketing performance. Hence, the first set of hypothesis is as follows:

H1: *CCC is positively associated with a) marketing operation excellence, b) cost utilization effectiveness, c) increased customer satisfaction, and d) marketing performance.*

- Product Diversity Presentation Awareness (PDP)

PDP refers to the firm's attempt to meet customers' demands and distribution by a variety of goods and services, and assembling of different products' information via a social media platform. Different products can be based on features, packaging, design, and brand image

(Frambach, Prabhu, and Verhallen, 2003). Previously, e-commerce websites mostly employed text and pictures to illustrate product information (Lightner and Eastman, 2002) for all items available in their store. The product diversity in an e-commerce environment can be presented by various media and information (Jahng, Jain, and Ramamurthy, 2002). Thus, product diversity in this context means a different mix or volume of products and services including physical size, complexity, and batch size (Miller, 1996).

Accordingly, Park (2002) suggested three essential aspects in online product presentations for success in online selling: Images of the product have to have the closest representation of the physical product, display related or similar products, and show various angles of the image—back, front, left, and right views. Predominantly, with a lot of products or services that e-commerce firms attempt to offer to their customers, management of product presentation is required. As a result of this reason, this paper is concerned with a product diversity presentation awareness concept. Interestingly, one important point to promote product variety in an online presentation, that is, product coordination, is also call "mix-and-match." It accommodates up-selling and cross-selling that is of key importance to customer relationship management and archives marketing profitability (Bolton, Lemon, and Verhoef, 2004). When products are displayed as coordinated, it fetches complementary information to facilitate the consumer's decision-making (Yoo and Kim, 2012). For instance, a computer notebook is offered to coordinate with a printer rather than presented alone. When two or more products are displayed as coordinated offerings, consumers evaluate those products with an overall impression derived from product pairing.

Based on the aforementioned literature review, product diversity presentation awareness plays an important role in the good perception of online consumers, as

well as the marketer's intelligence integrated with other related products offered to their customers. Thus, product diversity presentation awareness is more likely to encourage firms to accomplish their cost utilization effectiveness, marketing operation excellence, increased customer satisfaction, and marketing performance. Hence, the hypothesis is elaborated as follows:

H2: *PDP is positively associated with a) marketing operation excellence, b) cost utilization effectiveness, c) increased customer satisfaction, and d) marketing performance.*

- Proactive Competitor Learning Capability (PCL)

PCL refers to ability of the firm in scanning, monitoring and analyzing the competitive environment continuously in order to forecast; evaluate the competitive situation; and access information about the company profile, marketing activity, strategies, or conventions of competitors with social media implementation (Ma, Pant, and Sheng, 2011). Organizational learning is divided into two categories, external and internal learning. Competitor learning is a part of external learning. Organizational learning of the firm provides the necessary business competency to accomplish a sustainable competitive advantage (Bierly and Hämäläinen, 1995). Competitor learning is one source factor of competitive advantage and advocates successful innovation, when they learn from the invention of their competitors (Lopez, Peon, and Ordas, 2005).

One empirical study confirmed that the extent to which managerial information technology uses computer network management, serves internal and external learning communication (Maiga et al., 2013). Social media technology is one element of computer network technology that empowers one to make it easy to identify one's competitor which can be

obtained by a friend request on a Facebook fan page, following a rich message from Twitter, or LinkedIn profile, allowing meeting potential customers, employee experts, and other companies (Ristova, 2014). These social media tools do not charge for their service; as a result, the firms can save costs for a paid company profile that was mentioned earlier. Thus, the hypothesis is elaborated as follows:

H3: *PCL is a positively associated with a) marketing operation excellence, b) cost utilization effectiveness, c) increased customer satisfaction, and d) marketing performance.*

- Marketing Response Timeliness Orientation (MRT)

MRT is defined as the ability of the firm in discovering and perceiving customer needs via an employed social media platform, in suitable time (Narver et al., 2004; Bodlaj et al., 2012). In a marketing empirical perspective, one study indicated responsive market orientation had an influence on firm performance that had potential for the effectiveness of competitive strategy (Voola and O'Cass, 2010). Correspondingly, Lamore et al., (2013) asserted that responsive market orientation had positive significant, integration between marketing and research and development (R&D) departments; which also was strongly related with market performance.

On the other hand, the proactive market concentrates on a company that is "leading" its customers toward unconscious needs and then develops new products to meet these unexpressed needs (Narver et al., 2004). Consequently, a responsive market had not been influenced by an innovation performance which follows the examined hypotheses in the work of Bodlaj (2010). Subsequent research suggests that market response orientation is positively related to technology turbulence, market turbulence, and competitive intensity (Wang et al., 2013). Moreover, Homburg et al., (2004)

suggested that managers should be concerned with strategy implementation over strategy formulation, due to the fact that strategy implementation is a trend toward more effective operations than the intellectual processes that formulate the approach. Thus, the hypothesis is assigned as follows:

H4: *MRT is a positively associated with a) marketing operation excellence, b) cost utilization effectiveness, c) increased customer satisfaction, and d) marketing performance.*

- Marketing Operation Excellence (MOE)

MOE in this paper refers to the integration of a complicated set of marketing practices to enhance its marketing outcome through the most improved efficiency in a flexible delivery process, quick service response, and low cost of operation (Yu, Ramanathan, and Nath, 2014). It can be viewed as the proportion of quantity in a marketing outcome and quantity of marketing resources input that are deployed in marketing strategy implementation (Kalaignanam, Kushwaha, and Varadarajan, 2008). Actually, marketing operation concern can help firms be successful in superior performance; not only by performing in their organization but also by collaborating with external organizations.

The internet has been a constitutive core of the marketing operations of businesses (Kalaignanam, Kushwaha, and Varadarajan, 2008). Importantly, marketing operation has been focusing on minimal operational cost, flexibility improvement, and distribution of delivery with a high quality of products and service (Tan, Kannan, and Narasimhan, 2007).

Accordingly, 300 small and medium enterprise (SMEs) were administered in Mexico, the work by Maldonado-Guzmán et al., (2012) showed that the high level of collaboration in co-operation between organizations has a significant, positive

reduction on purchase costs, fosters innovation, and has superior financial performance. Furthermore, the empirical study of Krasnikov and Jayachandran (2008), by meta-analysis in 114 studies since October 2007, indicated that marketing capability has a stronger influence on firm performance than research and development (R&D), and operations capabilities. This research can assume that the firms with a high level of marketing operation excellence are more likely to have a high level of cost utilization effectiveness. Hence, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H5: *MOE is positively associated with a) cost utilization effectiveness, b) increased customer satisfaction, and c) marketing performance.*

- Cost Utilization Effectiveness (CUE)

CUE refers to the minimizing of marketing cost management that emerges from applying new social media marketing rather than conventional marketing forms. The firm can also reduce its cost to advertising, promoting, and announcing marketing activity to its customers, which leads to optimizing the business process and the success of budget management (Schniederjans et al., 2013). Essentially, the firms need to reduce their operational costs by managing the utilization of insufficient resources. Also, these firms show effort moving from traditional marketing practices—newspapers, radio, magazines, television advertising—towards more saving expenditures and social media marketing engagement (Tariq and Wahid, 2011).

The low-cost of internet access has opened up opportunities for the firm to deal directly with millions of customers (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009). Obviously, social media marketing is an online marketing tool that is based on absolute internet infrastructure. It builds new challenges for marketers, advertisers, strategists, and companies (Tariq and

Wahid, 2011). When a social media is deployed for a business, it is a buzz conversation that calls out the brand name. The firms are able to save time for data collection feedback, and it is also an attempt to resolve their customer responses. These practices are cost-effective methods in marketing activities (Edosomwan et al., 2011).

The cost utilization of conventional forms of marketing or traditional marketing is more costly over social media marketing, due to the social media platform being free of cost to create a company fan page on Facebook, upload a video to YouTube or even post on blogging sites. It can be alternatively mentioned that the use of social media is high volume, but low expense. Conversely, conventional marketing is low volume, but high expense. For example, YouTube can be better at content presentation to understand stories, rather than other approaches (Pace, 2008).

However, based on the literature review, cost utilization effectiveness might be obtained from social media marketing usage. Subsequently, the firm that can control cost utilization will show minimal sales cost and increased profitability. Ultimately, when the level of cost utilization effectiveness is high, the more likely will be a positive influence on marketing performance. Therefore, the hypothesis is posited as follows:

H6: *CUE is positively associated with marketing performance.*

- Increased Customer Satisfaction (ICS)

ICS refers to the augment of the feeling level of gratification acquired from marketing service, the underlying positive consumption experience, excitement, bringing novelty, and surprising service quality to serve customers (Khan and Fasih, 2014). Generally, the more customer satisfaction, the more likely there will be a repurchase in the future, leading to promotion by positive word-of-mouth

(WOM) that is highly believable (Tripathi, 2014).

In the company's aspect, a customer satisfaction trend can be evaluated by monitoring positive and negative comments or reviewing the company's brand by social media monitoring tools. Indeed, a content analysis of negative comments is a likely approach to the analysis of customer complaints. Also, monitoring a competitor's brand together with one's own, provides a competitive strategy for strengths and weaknesses in the trading market. As a result, social media monitoring can help a firm to identify emerging interest issues and trends that affect the industry (Mitchel, 2010). This information of customer trends along with customer's needs and wants, quickly leads to new product development that directly support their customer. For example, Pepsi's Mountain Dew makes practical use of the social media to incur new ideas for supporting decision-making for new product development. A fan page of the brand has input for new flavors, colors, and name packaging design from consumer engagement to come up with promotion ideas, product style, and target groups (Holay, 2011). All these are excellent approaches. Therefore, customer satisfaction can be obtained from this issue, due to the firm providing the new product or service that is beyond customer expectation.

However, ICS can be obtained from the customer service of the firm that provides either a higher level of satisfaction or exceeds expectation, which leads to superior marketing performance. Therefore, the hypothesis is posited as follows:

H7: *ICS is positively associated with marketing performance.*

- Marketing Performance (MKP)

MKP has been used to measure the perceived impact of electronic marketing adoption for marketing success (Eid and El-Gohary, 2013). According to O'Sullivan

and Abela (2007), it is noted that MKP can be divided into three research themes: measurement of marketing productivity, identification of metrics in use, and measurement of brand equity.

However, this paper defines MKP as the outcome of SMMS that can be both a financial and a nonfinancial measurement. The financial aspect can be assessed from sales growth, net profit, and reduction of sales costs (Eid and El-Gohary, 2013). Nevertheless, nonfinancial measurements can be evaluated with the level of satisfaction from an executive, manager or stakeholder (O'Sullivan and Abela, 2007).

7. Research Methodology

- Sample Selection and Data Collection Procedure

E-commerce business is chosen as the data source to manifest the empirical research. The population in this research is 2,077 firms that were acquired from the database list of the Department of Business Development (DBD), Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. One of the reasons for choosing e-commerce firms, is because it is business processes and operations based on electronic channels via internet technology. It means that firms usually apply social media tools in collaboration with e-commerce websites (Curty and Zhang, 2011).

The mail surveys were sent to 1,675 marketing manager/marketing directors by using the stratified random sampling method. It can be seemingly obtained by a main online product type proportion of a sample that is representative of the population (Koyuncu and Kadilar, 2010).

Four weeks after the preliminary mailing, a follow-up telephone call was conducted to those individuals who had not responded to return the surveys (Lamberti and Noci, 2010). As the result, a total of 307 questionnaires were returns, and 298 were usable. The data collection yielded 134 unreachable questionnaires, or more than 66 percent that showed a relocation address.

Thus, the effective response rate is 19.34 percent.

In order to verify the non-response bias, the making of comparisons between responders and non-responders on basic characteristics of samples such as firm size, firm age, business owner type, and firm capital is by tested the t-test statistics, comparing early versus late responders (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). As a result, there was no significant difference between those groups. It is presumed that the returned questionnaires are without non-response bias problems.

- Variable Measurements

Multiple items are for measuring each construct. Certainly, variables are estimated scales from their definitions and are applied from relevant marketing research. The five-point Likert scale utilizes intervals ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree, due to the question that measures perception of variables (Newell and Goldsmith, 2001).

- Dependent Variable

MKP is the result of SMMS operation. It is a measurement from both financial and non-financial performance. Thus, this variable is measured by four items that are adapted from Eid and El-Gohary (2013); O'Sullivan and Abela (2007).

- Independent variable

CCC concentrates on applicable firm social media tools to communicate and enhance relationships with its customers and prospects (Keller, 2001). These scales are newly implemented from the definition and literature review, including a five-item scale.

PDP is measured by an ability of the firm to present different product features, packaging, design, and brand image. These scales are adapted from Jiang and Benbasat (2007), including a four-item scale.

PCL is measured by the firm that can always be scanning, monitoring, and analyzing competitors. The firm stimulates

capacity that can be a learning strength, weakness, or forecasting and evaluation of competitive situations. These scales are adapted from Ma et al., (2011), which include a four-item scale.

MRT is assessed by the ability of the firm in social media, utilizing either discovering or understanding customer needs in both the present and future audience in suitable time that is faster than their competitors. These scales are adapted from Narver et al., (2004), including a four-item scale.

- Mediating variable

MOE is scaled by the firm that emphasizes standard building of delivery processes. The firm focuses on marketing solutions for best practices. The firm always improves marketing processes that are superior to marketing performance. Also, the firm frequently reconfigures instruments and databases for marketing. These scales are adapted from Larissa (2012), including a four-item scale.

CUE is related to the minimizing of marketing cost management that emerged from applying the new social media platform rather than traditional media. These scales are adapted from Schniederjans et al., (2013), including a four-item scale.

ICS is measured by the perceived level of gratification acquired from marketing services that are over a customer's expectations and demands. The measurement scale is adapted from Terpstra and Verbeeten (2014), including a four-item scale.

- Control Variables

E-commerce period operation (EPO) is measured by the number of years online selling has been performing in collaboration with the business operation (Saini and Johnson, 2005). The dummy data were separated into two groups; 0 = less than five years and 1 = equal to or more than five years.

- Method

The data were collected by mail questionnaire. Therefore, thirty observations are employed to pre-test procedures in the same population but are verified in the other sample group. In order to show content validity sufficiency, this study employed two experts as distinguished scholars that who suggested that the number of experts required for content validity is between two and twenty (Gable and Wolf, 1993).

Also, this study has shown strong validity and reliability as demonstrated in Table 1. The factor loading was ranging from 0.737 to 0.971 in that these scales are more than 0.40, indicating acceptable construct validity. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were measured between 0.819-0.957, which exceeds 0.70 to indicate high reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

- Statistical Techniques

The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis examined the hypotheses. Consequently, the proposed hypotheses were transformed into seven equations that guided the steps to regression analysis. Therefore, the equations are elaborated as follows.

Table 1: Results of measure validation

Constructs	Factor Loadings	Alpha Coefficient
Customer Communication Channel Focus (CCC)	.854 - .927	.928
Product Diversity Presentation Awareness (PDP)	.786 - .911	.871
Proactive Competitor Learning Capability (PCL)	.839 - .936	.927
Market Responsive Timeliness Orientation (MRT)	.786 - .930	.904
Cost Utilization Effectiveness (CUE)	.737 - .900	.874
Marketing Operation Excellence (MOE)	.740 - .907	.819
Increased Customer Satisfaction (ICS)	.821 - .933	.918
Marketing Performance (MKP)	.903 - .971	.957

$$Eq1: MOE = \alpha01 + \beta1CCC + \beta2PDP + \beta3PCL + \beta4MRT + \beta5EPO + \epsilon1$$

$$Eq2: CUE = \alpha02 + \beta6CCC + \beta7PDP + \beta8PCL + \beta9MRT + \beta10EPO + \epsilon2$$

$$Eq3: CUE = \alpha03 + \beta11MOE + \beta12EPO + \epsilon3$$

$$Eq4: ICS = \alpha04 + \beta13CCC + \beta14PDP + \beta15PCL + \beta16MRT + \beta17EPO + \epsilon4$$

$$Eq5: ICS = \alpha05 + \beta18MOE + \beta19EPO + \epsilon5$$

$$Eq6: MKP = \alpha06 + \beta20CCC + \beta21PDP + \beta22PCL + \beta23MRT + \beta24EPO + \epsilon6$$

$$Eq7: MKP = \alpha07 + \beta25CUE + \beta26MOE + \beta27ICS + \beta28EPO + \epsilon7$$

8. Results and Discussion

The descriptive statistics and correlation between variables are analyzed as shown in Table 2. The maximum scale of variance inflation factors (VIFs) was 2.701 which does not exceed the value of 10, indicating no multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). With regard to the auto-correlation effect, it was found that the Durbin-Watson (d) scale ranges from 1.915 to 2.276, which is between the critical value of $1.5 < d < 2.5$ (Durbin and Watson, 1971). Therefore, as to auto-correlation effects, there is no problem in this study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	CCC	PDP	PCL	MRT	CUE	MOE	CSI	MKP	EPO
Mean	4.145	4.021	3.907	4.073	3.757	3.831	4.122	3.729	-
S.D.	0.647	0.653	0.736	0.698	0.741	0.67	0.63	0.802	-
CCC	1								
PDP	.632***	1							
PCL	.534***	.630***	1						
MRT	.613***	.683***	.719***	1					
CUE	.449***	.428***	.453***	.517***	1				
MOE	.440***	.551***	.592***	.588***	.664***	1			
CSI	.556***	.559***	.461***	.552***	.489***	.694***	1		
MKP	.356***	.366***	.377***	.416***	.410***	.638***	.611***	1	
EPO	-0.051	-0.054	0.026	-0.049	-0.079	0.023	-0.092	-0.042	1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables						
	MOE (Eq 1)	CUE (Eq 2)	CSI (Eq 4)	MKP (Eq 6)	CUE (Eq 3)	CSI (Eq 5)	MKP (Eq 7)
Social Media Marketing Strategy:							
Customer Communication Channel Focus (CCC: H1a-d)	0.017 (0.063)	0.184*** (0.066)	0.273*** (0.064)	0.121 (0.073)			
Product Diversity Presentation Awareness (PDP: H2a-d)	0.207*** (0.069)	0.032 (0.075)	0.232*** (0.070)	0.075 (0.080)			
Proactive Competitor Learning Capability (PCL: H3a-d)	0.289*** (0.068)	0.133* (0.074)	0.025 (0.069)	0.122 (0.080)			
Market Response Timeliness Orientation (MRT: H4a-d)	0.244*** (0.075)	0.293*** (0.082)	0.220*** (0.076)	0.209** (0.088)			
Marketing Operation Excellence (MOE: H5a-c)					0.659*** (0.043)	0.695*** (0.041)	0.445*** (0.069)
Cost Utilization Effectiveness (CUE: H6)							-0.044 (0.058)
Increased Customer Satisfaction (ICS: H7)							0.320*** (0.060)
Control Variable:							
EPO	0.079 (0.091)	-0.116 (0.099)	-0.115 (0.093)	-0.051 (0.107)	-0.190** (0.087)	- 0.220*** (0.085)	-0.052 (0.088)
Adjusted R ²	0.417	0.295	0.399	0.187	0.446	0.489	0.456
Maximum VIF	2.698	2.698	2.698	2.698	1.001	1.001	2.701
Durbin-Watson	1.915	1.915	2.261	1.993	1.972	2.017	2.276
Beta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis, *** p < 0.01, ** p < 0.05, * p < 0.10							

Table 3 demonstrated the hypothesis testing results. As show in model 2 and 4, the result indicated that the coefficients of CCC have a positive and significant impact on CUE (H1b: $\beta_6 = .184$, $p < .01$), and ICS (H1c: $\beta_{13} = .273$, $p < .01$).

These empirical results are consistent with Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who had mentioned that social media enables a firm to participate and have direct communication with customers at a relevant cost savings, and shows higher

efficiency over a traditional communication instrument. For instance, Dell Computer applied Twitter by a micro-blogging application which provides sales alerts via sending out short, text-based posts. As a result, it generated incremental earnings.

On the other hand, as show in model 1 and 6, CCC has no significant relationship with both MOE (H1a: $\beta_1 = .017$, $p > .10$) and MKP (H1d: $\beta_{20} = .121$, $p > .10$). Paniagua and Sapena (2014) stated that communication by social media marketing

will positively relate to operational performance. However, they did not guarantee dissimilarity in any context—organizational culture, and online user behaviors in Spain are different from Thai e-commerce firms. Moreover, they also revealed that social media marketing by communication channels is an aspect that may have an indirect effect on financial and operational performance in the long period. **Hence, Hypotheses 1b and 1c are supported but 1a and 1d are not.**

As show in model 1 and 4, the relationship of PDP has a positive significant influence on MOE (H2a: $\beta_2 = .207$, $p < .01$) and ICS (H2c: $\beta_{14} = .232$, $p < .01$). These results are according to prior research which recommends that the comprehension of a product diversity presentation makes for a positive attitude toward the product or service (Feiereisen et al., 2013; Jiang and Benbasat, 2007). This means it can give more customer satisfaction.

However, as show in model 2 and 6, PDP has no significant influence on CUE (H2b: $\beta_7 = .032$, $p > .10$) and MKP (H2d: $\beta_{21} = .075$, $p > .10$). Notwithstanding, the richness of a production information presentation is either a picture or online video format, allowing more efficiency than a text-based presentation, however, it requires spending time, utilizing resources, having technical skills, and processing more facility devices than in a conventional marketing approach (Cude, 2000). Consequently, the firms should not have an extreme level of product diversity presentation in order to keep the level of cost utilization, and still have the best marketing performance. **Thus, Hypotheses 2a and 2c are supported but 2b and 2d are not.**

As show in model 1 and 2, the relationship of PCL has a positive significant influence on MOE (H3a: $\beta_3 = 0.289$, $p < .01$) and CUE (H3b: $\beta_8 = .133$, $p < 0.1$). Consistent with prior research (Maiga et al., 2013), this study's empirical findings provide that both internal and

external learning had an influence on quality and cost improvement, enhancing firm operational performance. **Hence, Hypotheses 3a and 3b are supported.** On the contrary, as show in model 4 and 6, PCL has no significant influence on ICS (H3c: $\beta_{15} = .030$, $p > .10$) and MKP (H3d: $\beta_{22} = .122$, $p > 0.1$). Dramatically, although Leaf (1978) believed that competitor learning can have an effect on customer satisfaction and marketing performance, this empirical examination was unexpected. The possibility, based on Maiga et al. (2013), was that competitor learning can have a possible, indirect effect on customer satisfaction and profitability. In this case, due to when an e-commerce firm has a learning competitor in a varied situation; in the same vein, the analysis of a competitor is sophisticated and takes a long time to ascertain its perception. Thus, the firms might not direct their response to the customer. **Hence, Hypotheses 3c and 3d are not supported.** On this point, regarding the extent of future research ideas for intervening variables—between proactive competitor learning capability and either ICS or MKP—should be concern.

Interestingly, as show in model 1, 2, 4, and 6, the coefficients of MRT have a positive and significant impact on MOE (H4a: $\beta_4 = .244$, $p < .01$), CUE (H4b: $\beta_9 = .293$, $p < .01$), ICS (H4c: $\beta_{16} = .220$, $p < .01$), and MKP (H4d: $\beta_{23} = .209$, $p < .05$). Expectedly, these results are according to the work of Voola and O'Cass (2010), who indicated that responsive market orientation has a strong influence on firm performance. Likewise, one empirical study asserted that the high level of market responsive orientation has a positive effect on marketing performance (Lamore, Berkowitz, and Farrington, 2013). **Therefore, Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d are supported.**

As show in model 3, MOE has a positive effect on, and strong significance for CUE (H5a: $\beta_{11} = .659$, $p < .01$), ICS (H5b: $\beta_{18} = .695$, $p < .01$), and MKP (H5c: $\beta_{26} = .445$, $p < .01$). It means that the firms

have the best technique, procedure, rule, and speedy delivery process over their competitors; thus, CUE, ICS, and MKP can become visible in the firm. Also, the discovery of the consistent work of Kalaiganam, Kushwaha, and Varadarajan (2008) revealed that marketing operations efficiency in organizational management enables firms to achieve low cost by using the internet as well as customer satisfaction in building the online shopper. It can be predicated that a high degree of MOE is able to obtain superior marketing outcomes as well. **Thus, Hypotheses 5a, 5b, and 5c are supported.**

Surprisingly, the CUE has no significant impact on the MKP (H6: $\beta_{25} = -.044$, $p > .10$). It seems likely that costs utilization management in Thai e-commerce firm is unable to reach optimization. This is despite the concept of Tichacek (2006) who believed that effective cost management requires the development of solutions and procedures that learn from prior projects and is able to be integrated with business goals. As to these views, it might be said that an initial project on a new technology application to support the firm always makes cost utilization higher than their repeated projects. Another possible point states that CUE might affect MKP in the long term, especially, in the context of Thai e-commerce firms. The dissemination of social media technology not exceeding 10 years in Thai businesses (NSO, 2014) implicates that applying marketing strategy has only been in an early-growth stage. **Hence, Hypothesis 6 is not supported.**

As show in model 7, ICS has a positive and strong significant impact on MKP (H7: $\beta_{27} = .320$, $p < .01$). Accordingly, one empirical study of Chi and Gursoy (2009) ascertained that customer satisfaction has positively influenced profitability and value in the hospitality and tourism industry. Specifically, due to the high level of service beyond customer expectation, customer satisfaction is able to become more incremental in that ultimate drive for more

revenue, profitability, and MKP, respectively. **As a result, Hypothesis 7 is supported.**

However, the evidence of the control variable, as the e-commerce period operation indicates a negative significant impact in a few models as show in model 3 and model 5. In model 3, the manifest indicated that when there are more levels of EPO, there is a lower level of CUE. Ordoobadi (2007) stated that investment in modern technology is always a challenge, because it might be difficult to estimate for future costs and earning returns. It seems likely that due to the rapid change of modern technology in the digital era, the operation of the firm that frequently follows new technology upgrades (such as changing new hardware devices, new mobile versions, or even new software solutions implemented to support dynamic consumer behavior), is timely.

Simultaneously, as shown in model 5, the results illustrated that when there are more levels of EPO; there is a lower level of customer satisfaction. In this case, Tripathi (2014) is certainly correct when he says that customer satisfaction of products and services may not assure that a customer would be permanently satisfied with the product or the service. Thereby, the marketer should be concerned about continuous customer engagement with social media in that one knows it as best the marketing tool in this era.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The key purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between SMMS and marketing outcomes in Thai e-commerce firms. The sample includes 298 observations from 1,675 e-commerce firms that are conducted by stratified random sampling methods. The OLS regression results show that CCC has positive significance for CUE and ICS. In the same vein, PDP has a positive significance for MOE and ICS. Furthermore, PCL has a positive significance for MOE and CUE. Interestingly, MRT has a strongly positive

significance among MOE, CUE, ICS, and MKP.

Powerfully, MOE has a positive significance among CUE, ICS, and MKP. Also, ICS has a positive significance for MKP as well. In the antecedent factors, TML has a potential effect to promote each dimension of SMMS. In addition, IME has positive significance for PDP and MRT. Meanwhile, MTG has positive significance for CCC and PDP. However, FRA has no significance for all dimensions of SMMS.

The finding of this study sheds light on guidelines applying electronic marketing strategy to support consumer behavior, or even building superior business performance. Comprehensively, SMMS supports almost every marketing outcome. Especially, the MRT aspect is powerful in promoting among MOE, CUE, ICS, and MKP.

- *Contributions*

The discovery provides several contributions as follows. Firstly, this research determines four dimensions of social media marketing strategy that include: customer communication channel focus, product diversity presentation awareness, proactive competitor learning capability, and market response timeliness orientation. One can disseminate and expand this construct to verify the circumstances in other populations.

Secondly, it provides an acknowledgement of the relationship in social media marketing strategy environments; especially, market response timeliness orientation elements are a powerful influence to all marketing outcomes.

Finally, this research provides managerial contributions to executive, marketing managers, information technology managers, and top managers regarding available social media application in organizations. Social media marketing is a new challenge in the performance of a firm that is relevant to marketing operations in product and service,

information management, and novel ideas through applications of social media, which rise to traditional marketing fulfilment. The smart marketer should follow any comment or conversation about a specific brand, company, competitors, and industry as much as possible, in order to identify what is the business's goal and target audience; and, it should apply social media marketing strategy to marketing outcome success. Therefore, social media marketing strategy is an interesting issue that is able to serve the organization for supplementing marketing performance in the digital generation.

- *Recommendations*

However, in order to build more interesting issues for marketing scholars, future research has a few recommendations. Due to the fact that the EPO was a control variable that has an effect on some models, the researcher should examine it carefully. Based on the result of model 3 and model 5 that is control variables significance, in order to maintain a high level of internal validity in future research that still remaining relationships with MOE on CUE and ICS. It requires a separate sample group which is different in the e-commerce period of operation between the two groups. For example, in data collection, only the firm has an e-commerce period operation that either not exceeds five years or is more than five years.

In addition, future research should investigate their antecedent and moderators effect of SMMS. For example, the antecedent might be transformational marketing leadership, innovative marketing experience, firm research availability, and modern technology growth. Future research may also consider either a different population, or compare the result with other samples such as food, software, or the electronic industry that has a high level of social media marketing strategy application.

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